NAVY MEDICINE LIVE

THE OFFICIAL BLOG OF U.S. NAVY AND MARINE CORPS HEALTH CARE • 2011 & 2012 WINNER OF BEST NAVY BLOG

| Home | About | Disclaimer | Navy Medicine News | Navy Medicine WebSite |

Written on FEBRUARY 5, 2013 AT 8:51 AM *by* VKREMER

A Look Back: Navy Medicine in 1913

Filed under NAVY HISTORY, U.S. MARINE CORPS, U.S. NAVY   (NO COMMENTS)

By Andre Sobocinski, historian, _U.S. Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery_

Operating room at Naval Hospital Annapolis in 1913 (BUMED Archives).

Much has changed over the past 100 years in not only the United States, but in Navy Medicine as well. Here's a look back 100 years ago.

In 1913, the U.S. population had reached 97,225,000 and stretched across 48 states with the additions of Arizona and New Mexico into the Union. Former Princeton President and New Jersey Governor Woodrow Wilson was inaugurated March 4, 1913 as the thirty-third U.S. president. His first achievements in the year included the establishment of the U.S. Federal Reserve.

Average life expectancy in the United States was 50 years for males and 55 years for females. Tuberculosis, pneumonia, and heart disease were the leading causes of mortality in 1913.

Navy Medicine Video

Navy Medicine is a global healthcare network of 63,000 Navy medical personnel around the world who provide high quality health care to more than one million eligible beneficiaries. Navy Medicine personnel deploy with Sailors and Marines worldwide, providing critical mission support aboard ship, in the air, under the sea and on the battlefield.

Navy Medicine Social Media

twitter **Follow us on Twitter**

facebook **Join us on Facebook**

issuu **Read our publications**

flickr **View our photo stream**

You Tube **Watch our videos**

Navy Medicine Live Archives

January 2015 (7)

December 2014 (17)

November 2014 (11)

October 2014 (15)

In 1913, the Ford Motor Company pioneered the moving assembly line. As a result, a single automobile could now be manufactured in just under 2.5 hours.

At the 69th Regiment Armory in New York City, America's first modern art exhibit is held marking the introduction of "Cubism," "Dadaism," "Fauvism," and "Abstract Expressionism" into the American lexicon.

The baseball world saw Frank "Home Run" Baker bash a league leading 12 home runs throughout the 1913 season. Baker's Philadelphia Athletics would beat the New York Giants in the "Fall Classic" to capture their third World Series in a row.

Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, Vince Lombardi, Jesse Owens, Burt Lancaster, Vivien Leigh, and Rosa Parks were all born in 1913.

***

In naval affairs, newspaper editor Josephus Daniels was appointed Secretary of the Navy. Daniels oversaw a force of 52, 202 officers and enlisted Sailors. In 1913, the Navy was organized into the Asiatic, Atlantic and Pacific fleets comprising 42 destroyers, 33 battleships, 27 gunboats , 26 light cruisers, 26 torpedo boats, 24 submarines, 20 fuel ships, 17 converted yachts, 10 armored cruisers, 10 monitors, 5 transports, 4 supply ships, and 2 hospital ships (USS *Relief* and USS *Solace*). The Navy's first aircraft carrier (USS *Langley*) was still nine years away.

In 1913, the Navy Medical Department was represented stateside and overseas by 15 active duty dentists, 1,234 hospital corpsmen1,130 nurses, and 292 physicians. Navy physicians were still called "surgeons." Dentists were referred to as "dental surgeons." Navy Nurses could be addressed as "superintendent," and "chief," if they were in leadership roles; having no rank in 1913, most nurses were commonly addressed as "Miss." Corpsmen could be "Hospital Stewards," or "Hospital Apprentices."

Salaries for Navy medical personnel varied based on seniority and position. Senior physicians serving as Fleet Surgeons and Medical Directors could earn up to $4,400 per year. Assistant surgeons with less than five years of service earned a total of $1,700 per year. The Navy Nurse Corps' most senior nurse (Superintendent) earned $1,800 per year, whereas all other Navy nurses were paid between $50 and $65 per month, based on seniority. Senior hospital corpsmen (Hospital Stewards) earned $60 per month and Hospital Apprentices First Class earned $30 per month and Hospital Apprentices made a mere $15 per month.

Naval Hospital Annapolis Pharmacy 1913 (BUMED Archives).

In 1913, the Navy operated hospitals stateside in Annapolis, MD, Brooklyn, NY, Chelsea, MA, Great Lakes, IL, Las Animas, CO, Mare Island, CA, Narragansett Bay, RI, Norfolk, VA, Philadelphia, PA, Portsmouth, NH, Puget Sound, WA, and Washington, DC. Overseas the Navy managed medical facilities in Guam, Guantanamo Bay (Cuba), Cañacao and Olongapo (The Philippines), Tutuila (America Samoa) and Yokohama (Japan).

Navy physicians were sent on special details throughout 1913 to investigate: environmental conditions of submarines, deep sea diving, the Alaska Coal industry, and the Vitamin deficiency disease Pellagra.

In 1913, there are still no authorized uniforms for Navy dental and medical officers serving with expeditionary forces. The custom in 1913 is for dentists and physicians to wear enlisted men's khaki uniforms. All sorts of variegated makeshift uniforms are observed.

For the first time, vacuum cleaners are installed at all naval hospitals proving "eminently satisfactory."

New naval tests are prescribed for officers who apply for aviation duty to ensure all applicants have "perfect control of their physical and mental faculties."

In 1913, Navy Surgeon General Charles Stokes recommended that ear protection be made available to all Sailors. Stokes wrote that "The necessity of such a device is becoming more generally appreciated, and men are more willing than formerly to protect themselves in this way."

Venereal diseases are the leading cause for admission into naval hospitals in 1913. Some 7,320 Sailors and Marines are admitted with gonorrhea and syphilis alone accounting for 120,896 sick days.

Smallpox was still a health issue in the Navy. In December 1913, a smallpox outbreak hit the crew of USS *Ohio* leading to five deaths. Throughout the year smallpox accounted for 681 sick days for Navy and Marine Corps personnel.

Footnote

1. 282 hospital stewards, 507 hospital apprentices first class, and 445 hospital apprentices

Sources

Annual Report of the Surgeon General, U.S. Navy to the Secretary of the Navy for the Fiscal Year 1913. Washington, DC: GPO. 1913.

Annual Report of the Surgeon General, U.S. Navy to the Secretary of the Navy for the Fiscal Year 1914. Washington, DC: GPO. 1914.

Register of the Commissioned and Warrant Officers of the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps, Jan 1 1913. Washington, DC: GPO. 1913.

Mortality   Statistics.   Website: http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/vsushistorical/mortstatsh_1913.pdf